



# CITY of SAN ANTONIO

## Development Services Department

1901 S. Alamo  
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Telephone Number (210) 207-1111

Fax Number (210) 207-0102

[www.sanantonio.gov/dsd](http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd)

### FENCE PERMIT INFORMATION AND APPLICATION

All **new** fences require a permit. For repairs or replacements of an **existing** fence, a permit is only required if the repair or replacement is no more than 25% of the length of the fence. Permits **MUST** be obtained *before* any work is done. If you are unsure whether or not a permit will be needed, contact the Department of Development Services at 210-207-1111.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND READ THE RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL FENCE SECTION depending on your situation. You are **REQUIRED** to sign that you read and understand the information prior to obtaining a permit. There are many variables related to fences, including fence height, what they can be made of and where fences can be built. The following information is intended to provide information for both residential fences (built entirely on one lot for a single family or duplex dwelling), or for a commercial fences (including a fence built across more than one lot on the exterior of a residential subdivision). For the actual city code sections these are in Section 35-514 of the Unified Development Code located at the [Municode web-site](http://www.sanantonio.gov/municode) under Article 5, Division 3. The [traffic plan review section](#) is available to answer questions related to clear vision and location of gates at a commercial driveway. The [environmental plan review section](#) is available to discuss tree preservation, protection and planting of new trees for a commercial fence. The [Business Assistance Center](#) is available for all other questions.

**Q. Are there requirements regarding what materials may be used to construct a fence?**

- A. Yes. Fences must be constructed of wood, chain link, stone, rock, concrete block, masonry brick, brick, decorative wrought iron, or other material(s) which are similar in durability. Unacceptable fence materials include cast-off, secondhand, and other items not originally intended to be fencing, plywood less than 5/8 inch thick, low-grade plywood, particle board, paper, visqueen plastic, plastic tarp (and similar materials), razor wire and other dangerous materials, sheet metal, roll metal, and corrugated metal.

**Q. My fence will be built on a corner lot, does that matter?**

- A. Fences built on a lot at a corner of an intersection may interfere with driver's ability to see oncoming traffic when at a stop sign and may result in an accident with possible injuries. Fences on corner lots must comply with the Clear Vision Area standards in Section 35-506(d)(5) of the UDC whether residential or commercial. Staff from the Plan Review [Traffic Section](#) will review where your fence may be located due to Clear Vision requirements at the time the permit application is brought in.

**Q. Must a fence be designed by an engineer?**

- A. No, except where greater than 6 feet in height if stone, rock, brick, masonry brick or CMU or where greater than 8-feet for other lighter materials such as wood, or open fences such as chain link. Fences over these heights must be designed by a licensed professional engineer in the State of Texas ("P.E.") showing that the foundation and support structure are designed to sustain wind loads in accordance with the International Building Code (IBC).

**Q. Will the fence be inspected once it is completed?**

- A. For commercial fences an inspection may be required after review if the fence is on a corner lot, or if a complaint is received concerning a fence being built or already built. Code Enforcement may issue a citation for a fence that is not built in accordance with city code requirements.

**Q. I have an easement on my property. Can my fence cross the easement?**

- A. Whatever entity has control of the easement must provide written permission for the fence to be constructed across their easement. This is your responsibility to obtain this permission.

\*\*\*\*Fences may not cross any non-exclusive ingress/egress easements.\*\*\*\*

The following agencies may be contacted regarding easements:

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PAGE 1 of

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Electrical and/or Gas | CPS               |
| • Water or Sewer        | SAWS              |
| • Drainage              | Public Works      |
| • Cable                 | Time-Warner Cable |
| • Telephone             | AT&T              |

**Q. How much does a permit cost?**

- A. Residential fence permits are \$26.50.  
Commercial fences permit fees are based on the valuation of the fence in the same manner as other commercial permits. See the Fee Schedule for more information: [Fee Schedule](#)  
 If a pre-construction inspection is requested for a clear vision issue for a corner lot, the inspection costs are \$100.00 per hour (\$100 minimum).

**Q. What are the requirements for fences over 100-feet in length seen from the street?**

- A. If a fence is open by less than 50% (see definition below) and is over 100-feet long and seen from the street, then the surface of the fence is required to be broken up by the use of a column, pillar, or a projection of the fence surface of at least 1-foot for a distance of at least 3-feet, but no more than 20 feet.

**Q. May signs be placed on the fence?**

- A. Not without a separate sign permit. Please contact the [Sign Section](#) for more information. A small sign placed by a contractor advertising their company as the designer and contractor of a fence is allowed without a separate permit.

**Q. May I remove a tree that will interfere with the construction of a fence?**

- A. For Residential a homeowner may remove trees on their own lot. Residential trees are not protected by City ordinance. For Residential fences, a permit may be issued over the counter without additional reviews.

For Commercial, trees are protected and may not be removed, damaged, or the root protection zone disturbed without a separate tree permit. A Tree Affidavit (tree permit) is required to be submitted with the fence application whether there are trees in the vicinity or not (see information below). A separate tree review will be conducted prior to issuance of the fence permit which may take up to 3-business days; during which time a city tree inspector will visit the site. Once the tree inspection and review is complete a fence permit may be issued.

**Information Regarding Residential Fences (A fence on one single residential lot)**

**Q. Where may I obtain a fence permit?**

- A. At the Cliff Morton Business and Development Services Center located at 1901 S Alamo Street, or at any of the COSA Community Link Service Center locations. For locations please visit <http://www.sanantonio.gov/customer/serviceCenters.aspx>

Please note that if the fence is in a historic district, overlay district, RIO district, or floodplain, or if there are extenuating circumstances, it will be necessary to come to 1901 S Alamo.

**Q. What should I bring to get a permit?**

- A. A site plan (a drawing showing your property dimensions, location of your dwelling, and location of the fence), information on the type of material that will be used to construct your fence, and information on how tall and where the fence will be located.

**Q. How tall can my fence be?**

- A. Generally, solid fences and fences not predominantly open (less than 70% open) within the front yard can be no taller than 3 feet in height. Predominantly open fences (70% or more open) in the front yard can be up to 4 feet in height. Side and rear yard fences (behind the front façade of the home) can be up to 6 feet in height. The height is measured as the vertical distance from the lowest adjacent ground level (either inside of outside of the fence) to the top of the tallest element of the fence material, excluding purely decorative features placed on top of any

column, pillar, or post. Under some circumstances, retaining wall height will be calculated in the height of the fence. Yards can be determined using the illustration following this section:

**Q. What does predominantly open mean?**

- A. Predominantly open means that 70% or more of the fence is open voids. A good rule of thumb for picket fences is for every 10 feet of fence, 7 feet of that 10 feet is open. Open chain link fences generally are considered “predominantly open” while standard 1-inch wood lattice generally is not.

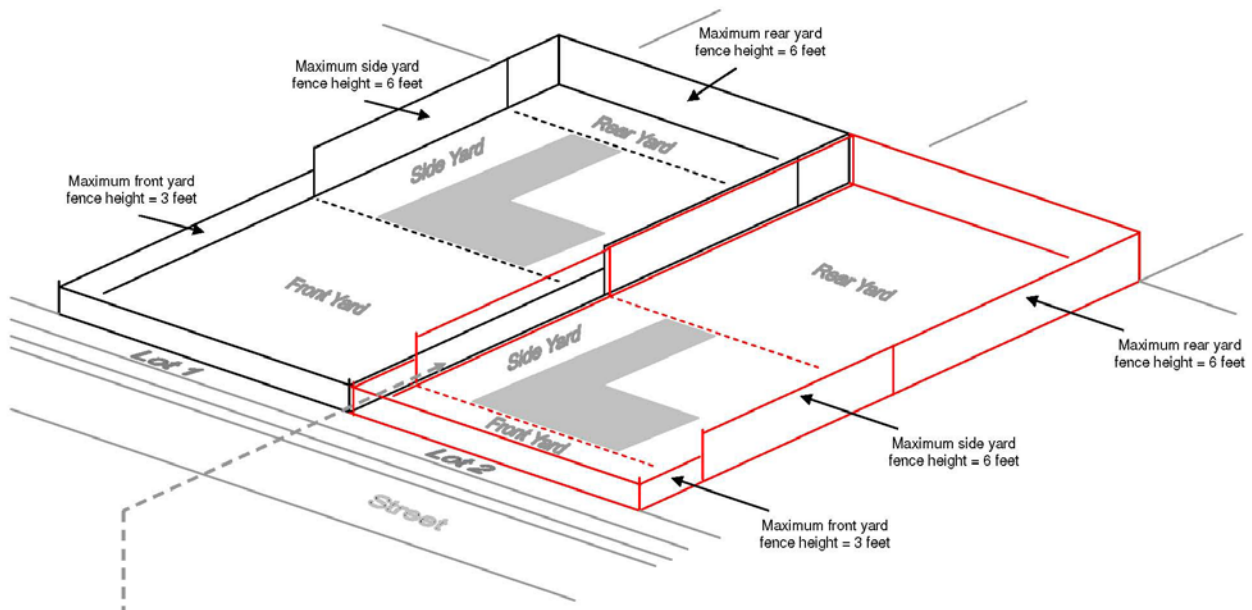
**Q. Are there exceptions to the height limitations?**

- A. There are some limited exceptions. Sport courts, large lots (meeting minimum size standards and in certain zoning districts), and significant elevations differences (4 feet or greater) with adjacent properties may allow for higher fences. Other exceptions require an application to the Board of Adjustment (BOA) for a variance; you should speak to a BOA staffer for more information regarding this process.
- Sports Court Fencing - Only allowed in the rear yard, no closer than 20-feet from the rear or side property line. Maximum height of 12-feet
  - Large Lot fences - Predominantly open fences in the front yard up to 6-feet allowed by right in FR, RD, RE and R-20 zoning districts and by special exception in other zoning districts - Require a minimum 20,000 sq ft lot, house 20-feet from the front property line and a minimum of 100-feet lot frontage on the street.

### Permitted Fence Heights

**UDC Sec. 35-514. Fences.**

- The maximum height for a front yard solid screen fence shall not exceed 3 feet in height.
- The maximum height for a front yard open space fence shall not exceed 4 feet in height.
- The maximum height for a side yard fence shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
- The maximum height for a rear yard fence shall not exceed 6 feet in height.



Notice:  
The side yard fence of lot 2 runs along the front yard fence of lot 1. In this area the fence on lot 2 is allowed a 6 feet maximum height, even though the fence on lot 1 is only allowed a 3 feet maximum height.

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PAGE 3 of

**Information Regarding Commercial, Industrial, and Multi-Family Fences (including fences on the perimeter of a single family subdivision - fence would be built on multi residential lots)**

**Q. Where may I obtain a fence permit?**

- A. At the Cliff Morton Business and Development Services Center located at 1901 S Alamo Street, just south of downtown at the northwest corner of South Alamo and South Flores. Office hours are from 7:45 am to 4:30 pm.

**Q. What is needed in order to apply for a permit?**

- A. The following documents are needed in order to apply:
- A completed "Fence Permit Application" available online at:  
[https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/DSDDocumentCentral/upload/Fence\\_Permit09.pdf](https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/DSDDocumentCentral/upload/Fence_Permit09.pdf)
  - A Tree Affidavit (filled out and notarized) - located at:  
<https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/DSDDocumentCentral/upload/TreeAffidavit.pdf>
  - Two (2) sets of detailed fence designs in accordance with the 2012 International Building Code (IBC).
  - Two (2) sets of footing details.
  - Two (2) sets of a Site plan showing the location of the fence.

The design is required to be engineered for stone, rock, brick, masonry brick or CMU fences over 6-feet or over 8-feet for other lighter or open materials (Design by a Professional Engineer licensed by the State of Texas)

**Q. Can barbed wire be used?**

- A. Barbed wire can be used only under certain conditions. For private, non-residential facilities, the Director of Development Services may authorize the use of barbed wire via an administrative exception under the following conditions: See [Information Bulletin 124](#) for submittal and application information. The request must show compliance with the following:

- Due to location, the barbed wire will not be capable of inflicting significant physical injury to the general public
- The fence is behind the minimum setback line except where surrounded by industrial uses
- The barbed wire is demonstrated as a requirement for operations and for security
- There are not more than three strands of barbed wire placed on the top of the fence (minimum height of 6 feet) and the strands slant away from the street or adjoining property

**Q. Is electric fencing allowed?**

- A. Electrified fencing is allowed only within "L", "I-1", and "I-2" zoning districts, and the fencing must comply with all of the provisions of the City Code - Part II - Chapter 10 - Article VI - Section 10-53(d) which can be found on municode at: <http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=11508> A separate commercial building permit is required. This permit is not obtained over the counter. Refer to staff for an application.

**Q. How tall can my fence be?**

- A. Allowable fence height depends on the type fence and the primary use of the property. Generally, the following chart from the UDC shows the maximum fence height allowed. The chart can be found in the UDC on Page UDCV:119-120.

<i>Permitted Uses</i>	<i>Front Yard</i>	<i>Side Yard</i>	<i>Rear Yard</i>
Multi-Family Use	3'0" solid fence 4'0" predominantly open fence 6'0" predominantly open if more than 25 dwelling units	6'0"	6'0"
Commercial & Office Use	3'0" solid fence		

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PAGE 4 of

	4'0" predominantly open fence	6'0"	6'0"
Industrial Use (including communication towers)	8'0"	8'0"	8'0"
<i>Permitted Uses</i>	<i>Front Yard</i>	<i>Side Yard</i>	<i>Rear Yard</i>
Parking Lots, Vacant Lots, Churches, Schools, Swimming Pools, Stormwater Management Facilities, & Parks (Public property, including parks, require HDRC review)	3'0" solid fence 6'0" predominantly open	6'0"	6'0"
MI-1 or MI-2 Village Center	Allowed only by specific use authorization	6'0"	6'0"

**Q. How do I know which side is the front of my property?**

- A. See information bulletin #539 available online at:  
<https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/dsddocumentcentral/upload/IB539.pdf>

**Q. What does it mean to be “predominantly open” or “solid fence”?**

- A. The UDC defines a predominantly open fence as: *A fence constructed so that its surface area, calculated as the square of its heights and applicable length, is constructed with seventy (70) percent of its surface area as open voids to permit circulation of air and visibility through the fence.*  
The UDC defines a solid fence as: *A fence constructed so that its surface area, calculated as the square of its heights and applicable length, is constructed with less than seventy (70) percent of its surface area as open voids.*

**Q. Are there exceptions to these height limitations?**

- A. Salvage yards, extraction and mining operations, and outside storage of dangerous substances require higher fencing and the relevant City Codes relating to those uses should be followed. Significant elevation differences with adjacent properties (4 feet or greater), certain subdivision fencing, and specific use authorizations approved by the City Council allow fences as high as 8 feet. Other exceptions require an application to the Board of Adjustment (BOA) for a variance; you should speak to a BOA staffer for more information regarding this process. The variance application form is available online at:  
<https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/dsddocumentcentral/upload/Variance%20Application%20%20Fillable%20Form.pdf>

**Q. Am I ever required to have a fence of a certain height?**

- A. In some cases, such as the uses detailed above, fences are required to be of a certain height. Also, a fence is required to be a *minimum* of 6 feet high when:
- Commercial, Industrial, and Multi-Family Uses adjoin property with existing single-family residential uses.
  - A fence is utilized as part of a required buffer
  - A fence is utilized as required screening for off-street loading spaces, refuse and outdoor storage areas, antennas, satellite dishes, and mechanical equipment in street yards.
- Screening and buffer yard fences shall be a minimum of 6 feet in height but in no case shall exceed 12 feet in height in accordance with the Building Code Section 6-2.

**Q. Are there any additional reviews required for a commercial fence?**

- A. If a commercial fence is being constructed in a flood plain and/or in a historic district, additional reviews and plan review fees are required by either Public Works Storm Water Plan Review and/or Historic Preservation. These agencies are located at 1901 South Alamo and have desks at the front counter. These agencies may require additional information than listed here by Development Services.

**Q. Are there any other permits required for a commercial fence?**

- A. If a gate is being proposed that has electric power to operate, a separate electrical permit is required. The permit is required to be pulled by a licensed electrical contractor holding a Masters Electrical license from the State of Texas.

If irrigation is being proposed for new landscaping a commercial fence, an irrigation permit is required to be pulled by an irrigator licensed by the State of Texas.

**Q. What is required if a gate is being proposed at a driveway for a commercial fence?**

- A. If a gate is being proposed that would block a driveway into a property, then the gate needs to be setback from the curb line to allow cars to wait for the gate to open without interfering with the traffic on the main road. Generally the gate must be set back at least 20-feet from a two lane roadway, or set back at least 40-feet from a 4-lane roadway. A very high volume, and higher speed, roadways may require more than 40-feet. If there is a card reader or some other device used to open the gate, the 20 and 40-feet distances are measured from the curb-line to the card reader rather than to the face of the gate.
- If a gate is blocking a driveway, a Knox Box or Knox Pad-lock is required to be installed on the gate, which allows the Fire Department to open the gate and gain access to the property for emergency events.

**Q. Would a gate ever be required in a commercial fence?**

- A. If there is no fire lane into the property and the Fire Department is required to fight a fire from the street, they will need access through a fence. A gate or gates located to allow the Fire Department to pull hose to all parts of the building will be required to be installed with a Knox pad-lock for fire access into the property.

**Q. Is there other information required for a fence that serves as a perimeter fence for a single family subdivision?**

- A. A subdivision perimeter fence must be maintained by the homeowners association. The fence may be up to 8-feet tall and may need to be designed by an engineer depending on the material and must contain one of the following every 50-feet:
- An offset or column extending at least 12-inches vertical and 6-inches horizontal from the remainder of the fence.
  - The fence articulated by means of a recess or projection not less than 12-inches horizontally from the face of the fence
  - Climbing vines, shrubs or trees planted along the base of the fence that fronts a public road. The remaining areas shall be landscaped with grass or low ground cover. All plants shall be irrigated with an irrigation system.

**Q. Are there any other requirement for a commercial fence?**

- A. If a fence is proposed in an area covered by various city planning documents, there may be other recommendations or requirements not listed in this application. Sector Plans and Community & Neighborhood Plans may contain "recommendations" concerning commercial fences. Certain Corridor Overlay districts may also have mandatory requirements. These plans are available at the following web-site: [Department of Planning and Community Development - Planning Library](#)





## Development Services Department Residential Fence Permit Application

**Permit Number:** (assigned by City Staff)

**Date:**

**Owner Name:**

**Address:**

**Fence Height:**

**Fence Type: (Check one below)**

**Wood**

**Chain Link**

**Stone**

**Rock**

**Concrete**

**Brick**

**Masonry**

**Wrought  
Iron**

**Other**

Diagram of residential lot where fence will be installed. (Commercial must be submitted separately):

**Corner Lot : Yes [ ] or No [ ]**

**Does the adjacent or cross street have on-coming traffic approaching  
around a curve: Yes [ ] or No [ ]**

Note: If you checked "Yes" to the above questions, you are responsible for ensuring the fence is installed in accordance with the Unified Development Code requirements for clear vision (see last page - 9).

Residential Fence Fee:

\$ 25.00

+3% Technological Fee

+3% Development Services Fee

By signing the application as the homeowner or contractor, I certify that I have read and understood all the requirements for fences in this application. I certify that the fence installed with this permit will be installed according to the requirements of the City of San Antonio Unified Development Code.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of applicant*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contractor Name/  
Homeowner Name:**

**License #:**

**Escrow: YES [ ] or NO [ ]**

**Authorized Agent Name:**

**Contact ID#: AC**

**Telephone:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**



## Development Services Department Commercial Fence Permit Application

Property Address:

Applicant Name:

Applicant Address:

Applicant Email:

Applicant Phone Number:

Owner Name:

Address:

Contractor Name:

License No.:

Contact ID No.:

Contractor Email:

Contractor Phone Number:

### Submittal Documents Required

Two copies of the building plans, to include details on the fence and footings

Site Plan

Tree Affidavit

Fence Type (please check one below):

Fence Height:  
(Feet)

Fence Value \$  
(Materials and Labor):

Wood

Chain  
Link

Stone

Rock

Concrete

Brick

Masonry

Wrought  
Iron

Other

**Unacceptable material** include cast-off, secondhand, and other items not originally intended to be fencing, plywood less than 5/8 inch thick, low-grade plywood, particle board, paper, visqueen plastic, plastic tarp (and similar materials), sheet metal, roll metal, corrugated metal.

### Please answer all of the following questions to determine if additional submittal requires exist:

Y N	Is the fence over 6 feet and made of stone, rock, brick, masonry brick or CMU?	If yes, engineer seal and signature required on plans
Y N	Is the fence over 8 feet and made wood, chain link, wrought iron?	If yes, engineer seal and signature required on plans
Y N	Does the fence contain razor wire?	If yes, fence is not allowed
Y N	Does the fence contain barbed wire?	If yes, Administrative Variance required. See <a href="#">IB 124</a>
Y N	Does the fence contain electric wiring?	If yes, must submit a <a href="#">commercial building permit application</a>
Y N	Is the fence on a corner lot?	If yes, traffic review required. Traffic inspection may be required. <b>Applicant is responsible for ensuring the fence is installed in accordance with the Unified Development Code requirement for clear vision (see last page - 9)</b>
Y N	Is there a gate that is proposed across a commercial vehicular driveway?	If yes: Traffic review required. <a href="#">Electrical Permit</a> required. Knox-box required for Fire Department
Y N	Is the fence in the flood plain?	If yes, requires approval from Public Works (Storm Water)
Y N	Is the property in a historical district?	If yes, requires approval from the Office of Historic Preservation

**By signing the application as the owner or contractor, I certify that I have read and understood all the requirements for fences in this application. I certify that the fence installed with this permit will be installed according to the requirements of the City of San Antonio Unified Development Code.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## Measuring Intersection Sight Distance "X" to Determine Clear Vision Area

(Table to find Site Distance X is appropriate for two-way streets, low truck traffic, and for level terrain- See AASHTO for variations)

Posted	Number of Lanes (every 10' of median equals 1 Lane up to 20')						
Speed limit	2 (28'-30')	3 (36')	4 (40'-44')	5 (62')	6 (72')	7 (84')	8 (96')
<b>30 mph</b>	335'	355'	355'	375'	375'	400'	400'
<b>35 mph</b>	390'	415'	415'	440'	440'	465'	465'
<b>40 mph</b>	445'	470'	470'	500'	500'	530'	530'
<b>45 mph</b>	500'	530'	530'	565'	565'	595'	595'

tg\* =            7.5 sec.      8 sec.      8 sec.      8.5 sec.      8.5 sec.      9 sec.      9 sec.

\* tg increases where on-coming traffic is traveling uphill and for high truck traffic – See AASHTO for values

Sight Distance **X** is measured along the travel lane from **B** or **C** to the intersection in front of A (point **D**)

Point **A** is measured 14'-6" from back of curb where a driver is stopped waiting for traffic

Point **B** and **C** are located looking left and right, along the path of travel of approaching cars

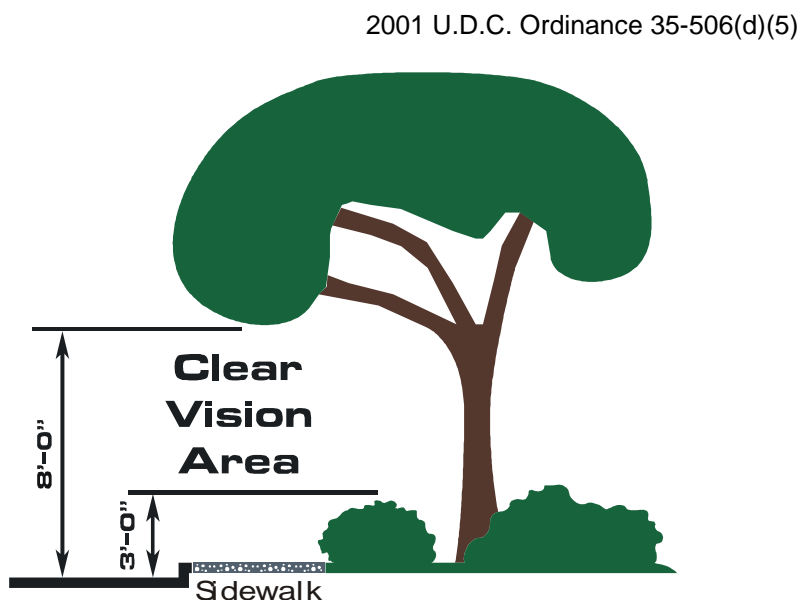
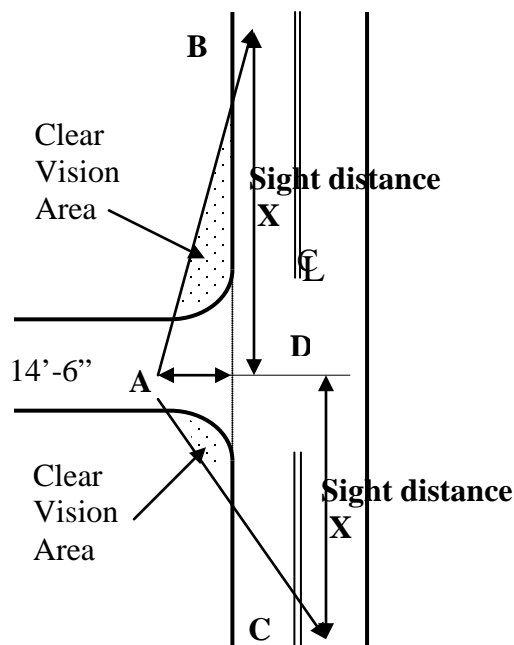
Use table above or use equation below to determine sight distance X:

Using 2004 AASHTO            **ISD=1.47(v)(tg)**            V= Speed in mph

Example – 2 lanes, 30 mph, level terrain            1.47(30mph)(7.5) = 330.75 (rounded up to 335 in table)

The Clear Vision Area is the area created by the triangles ABD and ACD in drawing below

**Clear vision areas** must be free of visual obstructions, e.g. structures, walls, fences and vegetation which are higher than three (3) feet and lower than eight (8) feet above the street pavement.



2001 U.D.C. Ordinance 35-506(d)(5)